

*Costa fought to secure funding for Valley specialty crops in 2008 Farm Bill*

**Washington, D.C.** – Congressman Jim Costa today announced \$17,281,158 in federal funding to benefit Valley specialty crop growers. The funding, made available through the Farm Bill's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, was awarded to 64 projects across California. The Valley is a leading producer of specialty crops which include tree nuts, fruits, dried fruits, and vegetables.

**“We fought hard to secure funding for specialty crops in the last Farm Bill and I am pleased that Valley farmers will receive this support,”** said Costa. **“Our Valley is a leading producer of specialty crops and these grants are critical to growing our economy.”**

Congressman Costa, along with other Valley leaders like Rep. Dennis Cardoza, was instrumental in securing support for specialty crops in the 2008 Farm Bill. Through their support, the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 allocated \$1.7 billion for specialty crops. Before the 2008 Farm Bill, the Valley did not receive its fair share of federal funds as the majority of funding was reserved for commodity crops like corn and soybeans.

Since passage of the last Farm Bill, Costa has been working to position the Valley for success in the upcoming 2012 Farm Bill. In May, Costa hosted a hearing for the upcoming Farm Bill in Fresno so Washington lawmakers could hear first-hand the importance of supporting Valley agriculture.

**“The 2008 Farm Bill was a win for Valley agriculture and we must build on our success in 2012,”** said Costa. **“The hearing we had in Fresno took our Valley’s message straight to Washington. I will continue to fight so our farmers and entire economy see a fair return on our tax dollars.”**

The block grants will benefit crop growers and consumers as well. Projects include improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; investing in specialty crop research; developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops; pest and disease control; increasing the marketability of specialty crop farmers, including Native American and

disadvantaged farmers; and improving food access in underserved communities.

A full list of the 64 projects that will be funded can be viewed at the USDA's website [here](#) . Examples of projects funded are below:

- Partner with the California Agricultural Export Council and other interested members, which represent California specialty crop products such as almonds, pistachios, prunes, raisins, walnuts, and wine to implement a specialty crop promotional campaign in Europe
- Partner with the University of California's Center for Produce Safety to investigate the environmental factors that trigger survival mechanisms in outbreak-related strains of Salmonella and to elucidate those mechanisms related to desiccation tolerance and environmental persistence, which will help the produce industry interpret Salmonella-positive test results and assist in the decision-making process related to pre- and post-harvest risks of contamination
- Partner with the Almond Board to conduct a state-wide survey of almond production practices that will assist in the development of a comprehensive carbon literature review, modeling of soil carbon and nitrogen dynamics, and the development of a comparison between total carbon impacts of applied pruning compared with burning
- Partner with the California State Beekeepers Association, Inc. to encourage land owners and land managers to produce food resources for pollinators, specifically forage crops for honey bees pollinating CA specialty crops
- Partner with the Valley Fig Growers to enhance the competitiveness of California fig growers by contracting with a food product development firm that will assist in the development of new value-added uses for fig paste